



# DESE

Missouri  
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION

## FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

**October 2, 2023**

October is Farm to School Month!

### **Missouri Celebrates Farm to School Month**

Governor Parson Proclaims *October as Missouri Farm to School Month*.

October marks the beginning of National Farm to School Month – an exciting annual celebration of all things farm to school! Here are a few ways you can get involved in this year's celebration:

- Check out the National Farm to School Network's (NFSN) Farm to School Month [Event Calendar](#).
- Attend or host a farm field trip to connect children with local producers and where and how their food is grown or raised.
- Check out our DESE Farm to School page for [resources](#) and ideas for planning and celebrating. [Click here](#) to register and receive your toolkit for the [Missouri Crunch Off 2023](#). More information below!

**Farm to School Fact Sheets** - The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Team offers [over 20 different fact sheets](#) on a variety of topics, ranging from school gardening to local meat.

**Local Food Cooperative (LFS) Grant** - Would your school like to receive funds to help purchase local food? The **Local Food for Schools (LFS)** Grant is open now, watch the [training video](#) and [click here to apply](#). LEAs must complete the application and email the written plan to [Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov).

**The 2023 Farm to School Census is coming soon.** We need your response - here are some [resources](#) to help you prepare. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service will release the fourth Farm to School Census (Census) in October 2023, and your participation counts! The Census is the only national survey that examines the extent of farm to school activities — local food purchasing, school gardens, and agricultural education efforts — in schools across the country and over time.

**2023 Crunch Off** - In celebration of Farm to School Month, States throughout the Mountain Plains Region (CO, MT, MO, KS, NE, ND, SD, WY) are competing to see which State can get the most “crunches” into a local apple, or other local produce, per capita. As a [Crunch Off participant](#), you will join students, teachers, farmers, parents, community members, and local food enthusiasts in celebrating the wonderful produce Missouri has to offer. Your crunch efforts will encourage healthy eating and support local agriculture while celebrating Farm to School Month and shedding light on the wonderful efforts of our Child Nutrition partners. **Scan the QR code below to register!**

We hope you join us, and check out more resources [here](#), as we celebrate National Farm to School Month together!



## Temporary DESE Food and Nutrition Services Phone Number

**The DESE Food and Nutrition Services main contact number has temporarily been changed to a new number for LEAs calling the main line. Effective immediately, when contacting the FNS main office, dial**

**573-751-8673**

The old, 573-751-3526 line is still active, but has recently been experiencing a high volume of calls from families concerning the Pandemic Eligibility Benefits Program (P-EBT). The best mechanism for our office to continue to address P-EBT calls was to create a phone line specific for these callers.

If you are needing assistance from DESE Food and Nutrition Services office please contact us at 573-751-8673. We also encourage you to reach out to the [Nutrition Program Specialist in your region](#) for program specific questions. In addition, here is the [office contacts information](#) for all other program contacts.

## Let's Talk Tuesday: Verification Process

Please join us for another Let's Talk Tuesday webinar!

**October 3rd**  
**2:00-3:00 pm**

An email was sent out this morning to each LEAs Authorized Representative on file. The email includes the Zoom Link and [Verification Process Training](#) to review before tomorrow's webinar.

Topics and additional resources can be found in the section below.

As always, the webinar will be recorded and posted at a later date for those that are not able to attend the live release. We look forward to hosting this training for all of you.



## Topics for Let's Talk Tuesday October 3, 2023

### Verification Process:

Let's Talk Tuesday: Verification Process Training

Verification Process Resources

Verification Tracking Worksheet: Can be utilized to track activities and communications for each application that is selected for verification.

Verification Step-By-Step Summary: An overview and step-by-step summary of completing the verification process.

Verification Process Frequently asked Questions

Error Prone Chart and Calculator: (Click link and scroll down to *Chart and Calculator for Determining Error-Prone Applications - SY23-24.*) This document will open in Excel and is utilized to determine error-prone free and reduced applications.

### FNS SY Calendar:

Food and Nutrition Services Calendar and Deadlines

### Farm to School:

Local Food for Schools Grant Information

Celebrating October as National Farm to School Month and Missouri Farm to School Month: Apple Crunch Resources:

- 2023 Missouri Crunch
- 2023 Mountain Plains Crunch Off ([qualtrics.com](http://qualtrics.com))
- Promoting Specialty Crops in Missouri Schools (An opportunity to utilize funds to reimburse for Crunch Off participation).

### Save the Date for Upcoming Let's Talk Tuesdays!

- **October 17th** - USDA Foods will be having a Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar called *Making the Most of your Processed Pounds with the K12 Website*. Additional information coming soon. The Zoom link will be sent out the day prior to the webinar.
- **November** - Let's Talk Tuesday topic and date will be announced soon!

## FY 2023 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Information

### **AVAILABLE NOW!**

2023 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Information

- [Equipment Grant Ineligible List](#)
- [Equipment Grant Letter](#)
- [Equipment Grant Application](#)

**The Application deadline is October 27, 2023 - 4:30 PM.**

Missouri's FY23 State Funding Allocation is for \$507,821. The Equipment Assistance Grants will be especially effective in supporting School Food Authorities (SFAs) by enabling them to meet equipment needs, which have continued to experience supply chain disruptions in operating school food service.

DESE, FNS will use the Competitive Application Process this year once all eligible applications have been received. (Applications will NOT be awarded based off of Free and Reduced Percentages.) You can see this criteria outlined below:

- Provided is a list of schools that previously received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Equipment Assistance grant funds; therefore, are not eligible for this grant.
- All LEAs may apply.
- Selection criteria factors may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Age of food service equipment or lack of appropriate items
  - The availability of existing local funding for equipment purchases
  - Strategies for adopting lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student
  - Opportunities to realize meaningful impacts on nutrition and quality of meals
- Grant application must be completed in its entirety. Incomplete applications will be disqualified. All applications must be signed.
- The questions in the Focus Area of the grant application must address the need for equipment assistance in schools participating in the NSLP.
- Grant application must be submitted by the due date. There will be no exceptions.

### National School Lunch Week (NSLW)

**#NSLW23 will be celebrated October 9-13, 2023.**

NSLW is almost here! Use these School Nutrition Association (SNA) developed [tools and resources](#) to orchestrate a stellar celebration of school lunches. Let's "Level Up with School Lunch" this year! Here are some additional [resources](#) to help you get started!



### Reminders and Important Information

- **Claims** are due by the 15th of each month. Claim due dates and information can be found [here](#). The School Nutrition Program application, located in the web applications system, must be approved before a claim can be submitted for reimbursement. If your SNP application is *not* approved, please reach out to the Nutrition Program Specialist immediately, find your [contact here](#).
- **Financial Reports** are now open in the web applications system.
- **Food Safety Inspection** reports were due September 15th.
- **Verification** starts today, October 2nd. For an updated Verification guidance and step-by-step instruction please visit the [website](#).
- **Missouri HealthNet for Kids Data Collection Forms** (Attachment M) are due November, 30, 2023. You can mail or [email](#) these to the DESE, FNS office.

- **Food Service Management Company (FSMC)** bid/rebid information went out 9/28/2023 for those on our list for rebid. Those wanting a FSMC must use the USDA approved RFP that we send to you. Additional information on FSMC's can be found [here](#). If you wish to bid/rebid please contact [kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov](mailto:kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov) or call at 573-522-9849.
- **Missouri School Nutrition Association Conference (MSNA)** - On October 14th Attendees will have two opportunities to attend DESE Food and Nutrition Services Learning Labs.
- Review additional reminders and due dates in the [FNS calendar](#).

## Administrative and Procurement Review Schedules for 2023-2024 SY

The list of **Administrative Reviews (ARs)** to be conducted in the 23-24 SY was released a few months ago, but as in years past, we will be utilizing CN Resource (CNR) to assist in the completion of some of these reviews. The [2023-2024 Schedule of Administrative Reviews](#) is available on our website, as well as the list of [Reviews to be Conducted by CN Resource](#). Please use these lists as an indication of what to expect for the upcoming school year.

The list of **Procurement Reviews (PRs)** being conducted in the 23-24 SY can be found by clicking [here](#). CN Resource has begun these for some of the LEA's listed. Procurement review general information as well as prototype documents may be found [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Kyle Heislen at [kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov](mailto:kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov) or 573-522-9849.

## Important School Nutrition Requirements and Resources

- **Wellness** - We recently updated our [Wellness Page](#). You can find new resources as well as the Local Wellness Policy Fact sheet.
- **NEW - Menu Planner for School Meals** - The [Menu Planner for School Meals](#) has been revised to reflect the Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Final Rule. This technical resource is designed to help school nutrition professionals plan, prepare, provide, and market great tasting, nutritious, and safe meals. The content covers information on the following topics: nutrition, food safety, Farm to School, USDA Foods, seasonal foods, marketing, and the administrative review. The resource consists of seven chapters intended to stand on their own in addition to the introduction, quiz answer key, glossary, and appendixes sections.
- **Summer Workshop Round Table Topics - New Resources**
  - [Local Wellness Policy Fact Sheet](#)
  - [Food Allergy Fact Sheet](#)
  - [Managing the Problem of Meal Debt](#)
- **Adult Meal Pricing worksheets** have been posted here - [Adult Meal Prices | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(mo.gov\)](#). There is also a Q&A on pricing adult meals on the webpage.
- **School Lunch Menu E-Poster** - This resource is designed for school nutrition programs to display daily lunch menu options and remind students to eat a variety of foods while building a reimbursable meal. The [fillable pdf file](#) can be used for electronic message boards, webpages, and social media or can be printed and displayed in signholders.



All LEAs administering School Nutrition Programs are required to provide civil rights training for all frontline staff and supervisors who deal with School Nutrition Program applicants and participants. Examples include cooks, servers, cashiers, lunchroom supervisors, clerks and administrators. Staff must be trained at least one time per year and documentation of the training must be kept on file at the local level.

The [Civil Rights PowerPoint presentation](#) and [training documentation](#) are available on the [Civil Rights page](#) of the [Food and Nutrition Services website](#). Additional information concerning Civil Rights is also available on the site.

**And Justice For All Posters** - Child Nutrition Program operators must be using the green poster, official name AD-475A. These 2019 posters should continue to be displayed until the 2022 poster is printed by USDA and shipped out to State Agencies and are expecting to be right after the start of FY 2024 (October). DESE no longer has any supply of green posters.

## USDA Foods Update

### Save the Date!

We will be having a Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar called *Making the Most of your Processed Pounds with the K12 Website* on October 17th. Additional information coming soon. The Zoom link will be sent out the day prior to the webinar.

### USDA Foods Pre-Survey Coming in October!

Each year our USDA Foods Team sends out a pre-packet survey of commodity direct delivery (brown box) items that could be offered on the USDA Foods Packet published in January. On this survey we ask district to select the items they would most like to have offered. We tally district's preferences and those items are included on our USDA Foods Packet. Please watch for the survey and give us your district's feedback– the survey link will be sent to your district's Authorized Representative and survey responses are limited to one per district.

### Delivery Refund Allocation Lookup

On July 24, 2023, schools received notification of a delivery fee for USDA Foods received by Gold Star Foods. To review the letter please follow this link:

<https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/delivery-charges-notification-change-leas>

Our office is committed to supporting our schools and we know this was a financial burden. As we have been closely monitoring our own State Administrative Expense budget for additional opportunities to help offset some of the districts' delivery fees, DESE FNS has received a limited amount of additional funds that will allow us to offer public schools a Delivery Fee Credit Allocation. The amount each district will receive is based on your October 2022 enrollment numbers provided on the Verification Report.

A Delivery Credit Allocation Look-Up tool to identify the amount your district will receive in credit was sent to each district's Authorized Representative. It allows you to insert your six-digit agreement number in the yellow box using the following format "000-000". Your district name, enrollment number, and delivery refund amount will be displayed.

DESE has already worked with Gold Star Foods to apply the credit to your Gold Star account. This credit will be available to use against your October delivery fee and beyond until the credit is fully utilized. We hope this will provide a small amount of financial relief. DESE will continue to look for ways to support the financial stability of your food service account and will offer additional credits should the funds become available. If you have questions or need a copy of the Delivery Credit Allocation Look-Up Tool please contact us at [donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov](mailto:donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov).

## USDA Commodity Foods Expos – New\*\*

This year our USDA Foods Expos are being combined with two popular Food Shows – Heart of America and SFNDA. Districts will have two location choices and dates to select from – there is no cost to attend. See both commodity and commercial products in one venue. Receive continuing education hours with multiple breakout sessions and receive USDA Foods Updates and Commodities 101 Classes for new directors.

*Please “Save the Date” for your preferred location or attend both if you would like!*

**SFNDA Food Show/Commodity Expo** – Wednesday, January 31st, Orlando’s Banquet Hall, St Louis MO

**Heart of American Food Show/Commodity Expo** – Wednesday, February 7th, KCI Expo Center, Kansas City, MO

## **Direct Delivery (Brown Box) Bonus Foods- Available Now on Gold Star Website -**

Click on “Advertisements”

We have ordered additional truckloads of some of the most popular direct delivery items and will be offering them at different times throughout the school year.

**Gold Star Advertisement Feature** – When logged into your Gold Star account, the blue bar on the left side of the screen has a heading called USDA Direct Delivery. Underneath it is the “Advertisements” link where all Bonus foods available can be viewed and requested. District can also use this feature to offer others any direct delivery items they cannot use this school year that are still in their Gold Star Live account. Please advertise only items that you actually have in inventory. Do not select “Pending on Order”. Any of these advertisements will be deleted.

If items are not requested by another district, the district offering the items will be responsible to take delivery of the products. Complete instructions are included on the USDA Foods website under *Gold Star Training Videos – Advertisements*:

<https://youtu.be/FcpbOTCkHAQ>

Please request only the amount of bonus direct delivery items that can be immediately accepted and stored. Once bonus requests are approved they will be moved into each district’s Gold Star Live account. Bonus foods must be included a on a district’s next Gold Star delivery.

## Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our **Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!**



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